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Women and the Workplace

edited by Peter Karl Kresl

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Albert J. Mills

ORGANIZATIONAL ACCULTURATION AND GENDER DISCRIMINATION

Cette communication examine les rapports entre la culture institutionelle et la discrimination basée sur le sexe. Le professeur Mills y affirme que 1) le genre (l'identification sexuelle) est un déterminant social, que 2) les institutions forment une part importante de la vie sociale, et que donc, 3) la culture véhiculée par ces institutions nous fournit un champ d'étude propice à l'analyse du genre. S'en prenant au débat sur la culture institutionnelle, il considère que celui-ci a largement ignoré les considérations de genre, même si ce débat s'intéresse de près aux aspects expressifs, non-rationnels ou expérimentaux de ces institutions. Il reprend la thèse qui veut que le genre soit considéré comme un des aspects les plus importants de la culture institutionelle et que, comme tel, il ait des implications sur toute appréhension des pratiques discriminatoires basées sur le sexe.
S'appuyant sur des exemple empiriques, le professeur Mills conclut que la discrimination basée sur le sexe trouve ses racines dans la culture institutionnelle et devrait donc être analysée à ce niveau.

* * *

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Introduction

> "The traditional human rights commission model, which valiantly signalled to the community that redress was available for individuals subjected to deliberate acts of discrimination, is increasingly under attack for its statutory inadequacy to respond to the magnitude of the problem. Resolving discrimination caused by malevolent intent on a case-by-case basis puts human rights commissions in the position of stamping out brush fires when the urgency is in the incendiary potential of the whole forest". (*Report of the Commission on Equality in Employment*, 1984, p. 8)

The notion that the cultural milieux of organizations contribute to the existence, development and maintenance of sexual discrimination has been with us in fragmentary form for some time. It has long been recognized that gender is culturally determined, that it is a cultural phenomenon (Mead 1935; Oakley 1972; Bilton, et al. 1983); that there is an association between behavioral outcomes and cultural milieu (Benedict 1934; McClelland 1961); that organizations are a major cultural form (Denhardt 1981; Smircich 1983); that organizations have a significant impact upon identity (Brim and Wheeler 1966; Mortimer and Simmons 1978) and personality (Foucault 1979; Leonard 1984); and, that organizational culture is a critical metaphor for an understanding of organizational life (Jelineck, et al. 1983; Allaire and Firsirotu 1984).

Notwithstanding these arguments, focus upon the relationship between organizational culture and sexual discrimination is, as yet, relatively new and unexplored. It is a focus that has been opened up by the development of feminist critique *within* and *of* organizational analysis (Hearn and Parkin 1983; Ferguson 1984) and which has been strengthened by the report of the Abella Commission [1] and its concept of "systematic discrimination." [2]

This paper seeks to illustrate the importance of addressing sexual [3] discrimination through analysis of the culture or organizations and it seeks to explore some of the issues involved in the development of such a project.

The Metaphor

> "Culture as a root metaphor promotes a view of organizations as expressive forms, manifestations of human consciousness. Organizations are understood and analysed not mainly in economic or material terms, but in terms of their expressive, ideational, and symbolic aspects. Characterized very broadly, the research agenda stemming from this perspective is to explore the phenomenon of organization as subjective experience and to investigate the patterns that make organized action possible." (Smircich, 1983).

Over the last decade or so the concept of culture has gained increasing prominence within organizational analysis and in the process has renewed attention to organizational experience, to the impact of organizational life on the actors involved. Initial attention was focussed upon the link between organizational experience and performance (e.g., Ouchi 1981; Deal and Kennedy 1982; Peters and Waterman 1982) and while that approach continues to dominate the literature increasing attention has been given to the significance of organizational experience for human actors - their ability to interact, to cope, to grow, to survive (e.g., Smircich 1985; Morgan 1986).

An inevitable feature of the debate has been the search for an adequate definition of *culture*. Accounts vary. Some have been content to present little more than a sentence of description (e.g., David 1984). Some have been concerned to develop a definitive statement of the nature or character of organizational culture (e.g., Schein 1985). Yet others have been concerned to focus upon the hermeneutic value of the concept (e.g., Jelineck, et.al 1983). The difference in approach can be seen as deriving from respective paradigmatic locations and puzzle solving activities (Morgan 1980) [4], i.e., the utilization of the concept of culture differs according to the research aim and underlying assumptions, or "world view," of the researcher [5].

Despite differences in approach and conception a common aspect of the debate is the attempt to develop an adequate tool of analysis for conceptualizing organizational experience. Sometimes that experience is narrowly conceived, e.g., culture is equated with aspects of organizational commitment that contribute to the organization's performance (Peters and Waterman 1982), and sometimes it is broadly conceived, e.g., as a metaphor for understanding the symbolic patterns that constitute organizations (Smircich 1983). This paper focusses upon *rules*, viewing culture - both at organizational and societal levels of analysis - as unique configurations of rule-bound activities. Culture, in other words, is seen as a useful metaphor for understanding the collective nature of rule-bound activities. By *culture*, then, we are referring to a "way of life" that is characterised by certain rule behavior.

Any given culture is created and sustained through a processes of rule following and enactment (Morgan 1986). We are taught, both implicitly and explicitly, distinct ways of behaving, with attendant beliefs, values and understandings:

> "In one sense, then, we can say that the nature of a culture is found in its social norms and customs, and that if one adheres to these rules of behavior one will be successful in constructing an appropriate social reality" (Morgan 1986, p. 129).

The same process is at work in coming to terms with organizational cultures, which are "essentially unique in identifiable ways - they are marked by different rules":

> "The unique character of any given organizational culture will often be those important for new members to learn in order to hold appropriate expectations of others and to fulfill expectations others have of them" (Schall 1983, p. 558).

Rule-bound behavior, however, involves more than simple rule following (Morgan 1986), it involves the *enactment* (creation, interpretation and changing) of rules but in processes in which some are more powerful than others. Rules, more or less, control human behavior and particularly so that of those who stand in a weak relationship to the processes of rule enactment, i.e., women as opposed to men, working class as opposed to middle class persons, visible minorities and native peoples as opposed to whites, etc. This factor of *control* is particularly evident within organizations:

> "Control in organizations is achieved through what may be termed "rules." These rules are not necessarily formally defined by members of the organization, although they may be. They do not depend on the members' cognizance of them for their analytic utility. "Rules" is meant as a term by which one can formulate the structure underlying the apparent surface of organizational life ..." (Clegg 1981, p. 545).

Using this, materialist. perspective it is possible to characterize the culture of an organization as being composed of a particular configuration of rules of control [6].

A third aspect of rule behavior is that of *resistance* (Benson 1977). Not everyone is a passive recipient of rules. People rebel and resist and in a number of ways. They negotiate, they withdraw, they engage in sabotage, they "misinterpret," they overperform (as in "working to rule"), they act in an "eccentric" manner, and so on.

The culture of an organization, thus, can be viewed as consisting simultaneously of a structured set of rules in which behavior is bounded and a process, or outcome, resulting from the particular character of the rule-bound behavior of the actors involved.

Gender, and Organizational Analysis

> "Historically, the trade union is an essentially male institution ... The militance of a union has something in common with the enthusiasm which pervades the supporters of a football team. Male emotions are involved in which women share to only a limited degree. As for loyalty to the working class, women are usually without it. They have a sneaking regard for the upper class as is shown by their urge to follow the current fashion in dress. One sometimes sees adjacent doors in a public place labelled respectively "Ladies" and "Men." This usage symbolises the fact

> that the abolition of the gentleman, a proper trade unionist goal, does not mean the abolition of the lady. To down tools is unladylike - a good housewife would at least put them tidily away. Quite apart from that, to strike on a point of principle ... is something which no woman would advocate. More practical than her husband, she would rather have the money for food and clothes." C. Northcote Parkinson, 1973 (quoted in Purcell, 1979, p. 112).

The words of Northcote Parkinson, argues Purcell (1979), "both reflect and distort reality," revealing a "covert set of beliefs about the differences between men and women, which is widely held." We are reminded that attempts to analyse organizational life are underscored by meta rules of understanding. The way we approach and view organizational reality is filtered through methodological rules of organizational analysis [7]. Traditionally within organizational analysis those rules have tended to be, at best, gender-blind and, at worst, out of right sexist. Organizational studies have, by and large, ignored women - treating aspects of organizational behavior as typifying men and women alike, or they have treated women as peripheral to organizational life (Hearn and Parkin 1983).

We may note that these attitudes and assumptions are themselves informed by socially constructed rules of gender which they, in turn, serve to *reproduce* (Checkland 1981). These *reproduction rules* have presented partial and distorted views of organizational life that have resulted in a "neglect" of the impact of organization upon gender and of gender upon organization. Within organizational analysis understandings of key aspects of organizational behavior, such as motivation [8], participation [9] and management style [10], have been premised on such faulty, gender-blind methodologies. A similar set of problems arise out of attempts to account for women within organizations. Organizational analysts have tended to apply a "job model" of analysis when considering men and a "gender model" when considering women in organizations (Feldberg and Glenn 1979). This involves interpreting the behavior of men within organizations as being *job* related while that of women as being related to their gender (i.e., in the biologically reductionist sense). In the process the organizational involvement of women has been de-emphasised and the consequences of existing organizational constructs upon the lifes of women ignore [11].

These attitudes have continued, permeating the debate around the notion of organizational culture. From a variety of perspectives we are presented with the ludicrous image of gender neutral organizational cultures. The notion of "corporate culture," for instance, generally concerns questions of the effective motivation and incorporation of key organizational members [12]. Such accounts, rooted in a *functionalist* approach (Hearn and Parkin 1983), rest upon implicit assumptions of men and women which tend to accept as a given the notion of an "instrumental-expressive" division in the orientations and character of men and women respectively. More remarkably,

interpretive approaches to organizational culture, with their focus upon the construction of organizational reality, have also managed to avoid consideration of gender [13]. A "telling like it is" type of approach has led theorists in this perspective to concentrate on such questions as how a particular reality is managed, with the focus more-often-than-not upon male actors (Hearn and Parkin 1983). *Materialist* [14] approaches to organizational analysis have been largely, as yet, unconcerned with the problem of organizational culture as a mode of analysis, and their focus upon issues of class have tended to be imbued or centrally concerned with notions of male employers and workers (Hearn and Parkin 1983).

In recent years there have been some challenges to the continued dominance of male oriented organizational analysis (Wolff 1977; Clegg and Dunkerly 1980; Hearn and Parkin 1983; Burrell 1983; Ferguson 1984; Hearn and Parkin 1987), including a developing realization of the need for a gender focus within analyses of organizational culture (Riley 1983; Crompton and Jones 1984; Sheppard 1984; Smircich 1985; Morgan 1986) [15].

Gender Rules and Organizations

> "The fact that, in most industrial societies, a good part of a woman's adult life is spent giving birth to and raising children leads to a differentiation of domestic and public spheres of activity that . . . shape a number of relevant aspects of human social structure and psychology... (The) opposition between "domestic" and "public" ... does not **determine** cultural stereotypes or asymmetries in the evaluations of the sexes, but rather underlies them, to support a very general (and, for women, often demeaning) identification of women with domestic life and of men with public life." (Rosaldo 1974, pp. 23-24).

The case for linking gender and culture in analysis of organization is a compelling one. Basically, gender is culturally determined [16] and through a context and process in which complex organizations play a crucial part.

From very early in life children learn to "read" or understand social rules of behavior through, what may be called, *master* rules [17], i.e. sense is made of each of a number of rules by reference to a broader, more-or-less coherent class of rules which coalesce in notions of gender, of class, of race, and so on (Steedman, Urwin and Walkerdine 1985). Children learn the rules of being a boy or a girl and how to apply that broad gender rule to an understanding of other rules. Sometimes the rule is relatively simple and immediate as in certain dress codes which require females rather than males to wear skirts. Sometimes it is less immediate, embedded within other rules, the notion of *skill*, for example, is rarely applied to the work done by females (Braverman 1974; Pollert 1981).

Gender-rule learning is a process which is developed and maintained throughout the life of an individual. Within that process organizations play

a *crucial* rule, i.e., not only do they contribute to the *maintenance* of gender divisions but they are an essential part of the *creation* of those divisions. Complex organization bears on gender discrimination in at least three vital and inter-related ways.

First, the concept of organization is itself imbued with notions of gender division; "domestic" and "public" divisions have contributed to an association of organizations with males and male dominance. The very nature of organizations - male dominated, increasingly separate from domestic life - has ensured that appropriate conception of the character and function of organization conforms to a male-oriented notion of reality. Gibson Burrell (1984), for example, has documented the way in which male dominance of organizations, influenced by powerful religious bodies, has led to a constant concern to divorce human feelings from organizational life, according them a place in *domestic* life. In this historical analysis of *organizational de-sexualization* Burrell goes on to state that,

> "Today then, we are presented with a situation in which human features such as love and comfort are not seen as part of the organizational world. In popular ideology, rightly or wrongly, they are associated with the home and the family. But this translocation is not accidental. Human feelings including sexuality have gradually been repulsed from bureaucratic structures and have been relocated in the nonorganizational sphere - the world of civil society. Their expulsion back into the family, into *private* life and away from the world of work has been achieved by a whole variety of organizational forms" (Burrell 1984, p. 99).

This process is particularly evident in the development of *bureaucratic* organization. Bureaucratization has led to a "dualism of private-expressive and public-instrumental selves and worlds" (Glennon 1979, p. 18). It is a dualism that significantly impacts upon the lives of women (and of men) both within organizations themselves [18] and in regard to participation in social life generally [19].

Second, certain organizations can be seen as more-or-less directly intervening in the process of gender differentiation, e.g., schools (Deem 1978; Spender and Sarah 1980) [20], state institutions (Land 1976) [21], and the media (Goffman 1979).

Third, organizational practices more often than not conform to and extend sex-biased values through such activities as promotion, involvement and recruitment [22].

The ways in which these inter-relationships impact upon organizational life is examined in the next section.

The Rules of Organizational Life

> "Power in the organization [is] ...rather like a game of chess ... [It] is a function of the relationship of pieces (units) to rules, in that rules invest a certain power in a piece, independently of its position on the board. Imagine a game more analogous to social reality. In this game the rules are frequently changing and not all clear. Whoever was able to exploit this uncertainty, and rule in his interest, would in this sense have power ... To the extent that all pieces were able to negotiate their positions, more or less, then in a game with a fixed number of pieces, that piece which ended up ruling on the greatest number of pieces, serving its interests in preference to theirs, would be the most powerful. But obviously a piece like the Queen would start in a more privileged position than a pawn, simply because the extant rules, which are now open to interpretation, enable her to begin the sequence with more potential moves to make." (Clegg and Dunkerley 1980, p. 444).

Extra-organizational rules, i.e., understandings about the respective social worth and function of males and females, impact upon organizational life in a number of ways. How those rules are understood and enacted within organizations relies in good part upon the actor's relationship to the more general process of rule enactment. Within the rules of organizational life males, rather than females, occupy positions of authority (Wright **et al** 1982; Abella 1984) and, hence, tend to be the rule enactors and enforcers [23]. Organizational power, reproducing as it does social relationships in which men are dominant and women subordinate, poses a number of problems for females.

We can identify four major aspects of how women are socially perceived and evaluated in regard to their entry into and progress within organizations. They are evaluated according to assumptions about i) their role as women, i.e., their "function in life" ii) their extra-domestic capabilities, iii) the value of their physical and mental labour, and iv) their potential commitment to the organization.

The assumed "domestic" *responsibilities* of women is reflected throughout organizational life, affecting not only female perceptions of the jobs they might appropriately seek but also the perceptions of male recruiters as to who they may appropriately appoint. Males are usually the organizational "gate-keepers" both in the literal sense of manning barriers and in the symbolic sense of serving as recruiters to the organizations. This impacts upon the recruitment of women in two major ways. It restricts them to a fairly narrow range of occupations [24] and it inhibits their ability to attain to the ranks of management. In this latter regard indications are that recruiters are less certain of and hence less willing to recruit candidates who significantly differ from themselves, i.e., where the candidate differs from the recruiters in terms of class background (Silverman and Jones 1973) or

gender (Dubeck 1978) they are less likely to be recruited into the organization. In regard to organizational entry in general,

> "... men have tended to dominate organizational roles and functions where there is a need for aggressive and forthright behavior, whereas women have until fairly recently been confined to roles that tend to place them in a subordinate position, as in nursing, clerical, and secretarial work, or roles designed to satisfy various kinds of male narcissism." (Morgan 1986, p. 211)

The scene for organizational power relationships is set in many ways by the traditional patriarchal family type, which includes not only notions of domesticity but also of sexuality. As Eldridge and Crombie remind us,

> "Roles are ubiquitous in social life. In even the least structured of situations people respond to one another in terms of expectations associated with sex and age roles, and the collective definitions of kinship roles such as son and wife." (Eldridge and Crombie 1974, p. 114)

Female experience within organizations can vary depending upon whether they are viewed as "wife," "daughter," or "lover".

Sexuality plays a powerful role within organizational life and is used both consciously and unconsciously to control female members. Within organizations coordination and control are achieved through power of some form or other, in regard to women that power is often enough exercised through sexuality. Indeed, as Burrell states,

> "Organizations ..., whether located in economy, policy or civil society can be understood fruitfully as sites of sexual harassment in which patriarchy and the control it gives over women is reflected in, and enhanced by, sexual harassment." (Burrell 1984, p. 101)

It is a process which permeates every aspect of organizational life, beginning with entry. In obtaining a job a female may find that sexual "attractiveness" forms at least part of the assessment on which she is recruited (Ferguson 1984). It may also serve as a basis of exclusion, particularly to traditionally male dominated occupations and industries such as mining, railways and seafaring. Inside the organization sexual attractiveness may be a vital requirement if the female is to retain her position. Hochschild (1983), for example refers to the type of pressure place on some airline stewardesses to appear glamourous. Sexual attractiveness may, of course, be utilized by females as a strategy for influencing male decision-makers (Morgan 1986), but even that is likely to depend on the needs and requirements of those decision makers [25]. A female's "attractiveness" may be uti-

lized in various ways by powerful males to symbolize their status and success (Quinn 1977). Lesser powerful males may use more explicitly sexual statements [26] and behavior [27] to effect control over females.

Sexuality can also be viewed as a broader threat by the organization (Hearn and Parkin 1983; Burrell 1984). This is particularly so in organizations that stress "bureaucratic discourse," with its emphasis on dispassionate organizational interaction (Ferguson 1984). Such threats may well affect the organization's attitude to the acceptability of women in the organization. Sexual relationships seen as disruptive to the bureaucrative life and function of the organization are usually stamped on. In cases where the organization moves to act against a romantic liaison it is more often than not the female that is disciplined, due in no small part to the fact that a large number of such affairs involve higher-placed males with lower-placed females (Quinn 1977).

In the context of *organizational* power,

> "the political consequences of male dominance are such that women learn the role of the subordinate, and that role can easily become self-perpetuating." (Ferguson 1984, p. 94)

This provides the basis for the worst of situations in which *sexual harassment* is a regular part of at least some aspect of organizational life (MacKinnon 1979).

A related aspect of the perceived role of female as "homemaker" is the attribution to women of a number of traits and personality characteristics. This establishes rules about appropriate behavior within organizations, rules which greatly inhibit a female's ability to attain, retain and be respected within a position of authority:

> "The links between the male stereotype and the values that dominate many ideas about the nature of organization are striking. Organizations are often encouraged to be rational, analytic, strategic, decision-oriented, tough, and aggressive, and so are men. This has important implications for women who wish to operate in this kind of world, for insofar as they attempt to foster these values, they are often seen as breaking the traditional female stereotype in a way that opens them to criticism, e.g., for being "overly assertive" and "trying to play a male role". " (Morgan 1986, p. 178)

This particularly affects the promotion opportunities for females. A number of studies have documented cases in which male decision-makers are less willing to promote females. Females are less likely to be perceived as having leadership qualities (Dubeck 1978), their judgments are less likely to

be trusted (Rosen and Jerdee 1974), and, ironically, they are likely to be negatively rated where they *do* exhibit leadership qualities - positively rated in men - of aggressiveness, independence, and assertiveness (Braverman et al 1973) [28].

The very conception of organizational power and authority is integrally linked to notions associated with maleness. To some extent this is also true of organizational knowledge. This comes in a number of variants. A female's professional or technical judgement may not be as readily accepted or believed as that of a man; a woman may have to work much harder than a man to "prove" that she is capable of doing a particular job; less "professional" or "technical" tasks may be assigned to a woman that would not be assigned to a man.

Embedded within understandings of the technical abilities of women are notions about their physical capabilities and attributes. Women can be thought of as unsuitable for certain jobs involving logic and reason, i.e., given the assumption that women tend to be more prone to irrational behavior. They can also be excluded from jobs felt to involve physical strength and stamina [29]. These notions can be further embedded in restrictions that effectively inhibit the employment of females on grounds of height [30]) and weight [31]. Assumptions about the physical capabilities of women are, for men and women alike, often very convincing. Images immediately come to mind of huge strong men lifting large heavy objects and for hours on end. Instead of offering challenges to the design of work and of organization [32] these images are enshrined in rules of ability and employability.

The value of the work done by females occupies a significant area of analysis in itself. The concept of *skill* involves a complex of rules about the nature and value of a person's work. To be judged skilled carries with it connotations about a person's dedication to a particular trade or occupation; it makes a statement about the knowledge they have to offer and, as a result, it bestows a certain workplace status and financial reward upon that person. The rules of skill evaluation signal to the organization what they need to pay, what behavior they might expect from and of the employee and what, in turn, is expected of them. A number of factors combine to ensure that skill is rarely attached to the work of females. Historically, building upon gender divisions, the work of men has been valued higher than that of women; females are rarely recruited to jobs involving skill training; training that allows women to prepare for skilled positions has been grossly inadequate [33]; and the cheapening of female labour is an advantage to employing organizations 34.

> "It can be seen that the market factors and ideological factors leading to women's segregation in the labour force meet in the systematic undervaluation of "women's work." Qualities such as close concentration, accuracy and manual dexterity which require obvious skill and training in craft

> or technician's jobs are relegated to "natural" and untrained "aptitudes" in women doing women's occupations." (Pollert 1981, p. 65)

The same is true of a number of occupations in regard to "professional" status. Subconsciously the definition of a true "profession" is one that is predominantly male (Hearn 1985), i.e., the church, armed forces, the medical profession, the law [35]. The more that women have entered and have been associated with a particular occupation the less likely that it has been perceived as a "profession." This is particularly the case with teaching, which has steadily reduced in social esteem as the percentage of female teachers began to predominate. Continuance of notions of the cheapness of female labour remains attractive to employing organizations, strengthened by the potential for "deprofessionalization" and "deskilling" that the use of female labour can achieve (Braverman 1974).

Organizational commitment is normally considered an important factor in organizational development. Organizations are concerned, on the one hand to limit human and financial expenditure on such things as training and, on the other hand, to develop a sense of loyalty and commitment in their employees. Such thinking inevitably colours approaches to recruitment, training, promotion and involvement in the organization. Being considered a *full* organizational member can often depend upon decision-makers' perceptions of whether a person "fits in" and is "committed" to the organization. This is problematic for women in that too often they are viewed as having a primary commitment to a domestic life outside of the organization (Barrett 1980). Assumptions of this kind can lead to a variety of organizational practices which both subtly and unsubtly signal to females that they are not regarded as *full* organization members; access may be denied to important organizational networks (Simpson, McCarrey and Edwards 1987) and especially where they are rooted in male centered extra-curricular activities; organizational belonging, in the widest sense, may be depend upon involvement in officially sanctioned, but male oriented social activities (Crompton and Jones 1984); and the motivating language of the organization, a key sign of inclusion, may be couched in terms of male oriented metaphors (Riley 1983) [36].

Organizations will vary, in extent and character, in the way the various aspects of extra-organizational rules become embodied within their organizational practices and thinking. It will depend upon a number of factors. Geographic and market location can be a factor. The ability of an organization to exercise strategic control over its environment may affect its desire to either reflect or change that environment. This control as in the case of multi-nationals or of company-towns, can influence not only the local economy but its particular sexual division of labour (Blauner 1967; Pollert 1981). These *strategic* rules of control can help to ensure the supply of cheap and submissive female labour, sanctioned by local community and re-

ligious traditions and in turn reinforced by the power of the employing organization.

Productive processes differ and this will be reflected in an organization's *technical* rules. Sexist rules about the value of a woman's work will differ accordingly from an organization employing traditionally skilled labour (e.g., engineering) from one, say, that employs the newer professional or technical skills (e.g., computer sciences).

The extent to which an organization sees a need for *social regulative* rules can also be a factor in determining the character of gendered experience. Some of the newer "high tech" industries see a need to incorporate their staff through various motivational schemes (Peters and Waterman 1982) while some of the older manufacturing companies appear concerned more with the corporate image of their, almost exclusively male, executives (Wright 1979).

Reproduction rules, as reflected in the structures of organizations, can vary from highly bureaucratized to fairly informal settings and, as a consequence, can be a major influence upon the type of activities that an organization allows or inhibits.

Organization rules also vary according to the degree and type of *state* rules that intervene. Crown Corporations, for example, are often expected to be exemplars of government policy and conduct their business with constraints that are very different from that of private concerns [37]. Employment equity is a particular case in point:

> "Although they see themselves as being on the corporate "cutting edge" by virtue of their crown status, and are willing to lead in the introduction of equitable employment practices, some of (those)... corporations were mindful of their competition with the private sector." (Abella 1984, p. 126)

Rules, as was stated earlier, are not only followed but are enacted and resisted. Hence the role of the actors involved will also influence the way in which extra-organizational rules are interpreted within an organization. The Abella Commission (1984), for example, noted that the attitudes of chief executives within Crown Corporations made a difference as to whether a program was put into force to effect employment equity. Situations also vary according to whether the women involved are effectively able to resist sexist behavior (Pollert 1981); an ability that is often helped or hindered by the potential of women to be unionised (Gunderson and Jain 1980) [38].

The ways that the various areas and aspects of rule behavior, their enactment, adaptation and resistance, combine compose the distinct character of an organization in what, we are calling here, an organizational culture.

Concluding Remarks

> "[We need]...to examine the degree to which the production of knowledge about organizational life is permeated by gender bias ... [A] feminist perspective on culture calls for analysis and critique of the underlying gender basis of the production of knowledge and the prevailing social order.... Thus an important and necessary aspect of a cultural paradigm for organizational analysis is the addition of a feminist voice to the discussion of organizational life." (Linda Smircich, 1985, p. 67)

The central focus of this paper has been to draw attention to the deep rooted character of sexual discrimination, located within the culture of organizations. The argument was motivated by a number of concerns: primarily that we recognise the importance of organizations in the construction of discriminatory gendered relations and personalities; that organizational experience is located within the context of the culture of organizations; and that consequently change needs to be multi-dimensional, not only aimed at the more overt acts of discrimination but at the rulebound structures in which sexism is often covertly located.

It is not the intent of the paper to counterpose a "culture" approach against that of more immediate attempts to deal with the problem of sexism at work. Changes *are* urgently required to rectify the gap between the pay of men and that of women, and changing the way that we evaluate the importance of the respective work of women and men is an important contribution to that. So too is it important to deal with the more overt cases of sexual harassment [39]. But these should be ever viewed as dismantling exercises in a wider process of deconstruction and reconstruction [40] of the overall context in which the quality of human experience is determined. In examining sexual discrimination at work we need to be aware of a multiplicity of societal and organizational influences that come together within organizations. In a focus upon culture we have a useful metaphor that implies a reality that is at one and the same time a reflection and a transformation of societal values. Through a rules analysis we have a useful tool of analysis for gauging the existence and extent of sexual discrimination within a given organization. But it is only useful in-so-far as it continually seeks to confront and reject the very gendered thinking (i.e., reproductive rules) that it is designed to interrogate.

By the very act of drawing attention to the cultural factors at work in the maintenance of discriminatory practices we have a useful way of beginning to address the problem. At a "middlerange' level we can expose a particular problem by drawing the attention of the relevant organization members to the existence and nature of certain invidious practices; an approach which, in part, is reflected in the conclusions of the Abella Commission. At a more fundamental level questions are raised about the ultimate value of organizations as particular cultural forms for tackling so-

cial problems [Is the divorce of domestic life from public life a worthwhile, even necessary sacrifice to achieve economic "progress"? Is the bureaucratization of social life a satisfactory price to pay for "civilization"?]. To this question some have argued for the wholesale deconstruction of organizational society (Hearn and Parkin 1983; Ferguson 1984). In any event the exposure of rules reveals their nature, allows them to be broken and new rules enacted. Exposure of the cultural rules of organizational life is an important contribution to the empowerment of actors from rule follows to rule enactors.

Notes

1 The Abella Commission was established by the federal government to "explore the most efficient, effective, and equitable means of promoting equity in employment for four groups: women, native people, disabled persons and visible minorities" (p.v of the Report). Its establishment was publicly announced on June 27, 1983. Its report, *Equality in Employment*, appeared on October 1984.

2 While this paper is not specifically about the Abella Commission its notion of systemic discrimination is worth quoting at length: "Rather than approaching discrimination from the perspective of the single perpetrator and the single victim, the systemic approach acknowledges that by and large the systems and practices we customarily and often unwittingly adopt may have an unjustifiably negative effect on certain groups in society.
"two basic antecedents:
a) a disparately negative impact that flows from the structure of systems designed for a homogeneous constituency; and
b) a disparately negative impact that flows from practices based on stereotypical characteristics ascribed to an individual because of the characteristics ascribed to the group of which he or she is a member.
The former usually results in systems designed for white ablebodied males; the latter usually results in practices based on white able-bodied males" perceptions of everyone else." Abella, 1984, pp. 9-10.

3 While focussing on **sexual** discrimination it is recognised, as Abella points out, that organizational life is discriminatory to other relatively powerless groups according to their able-bodiedness, colour, and ethnic background. The background and experiences of each group is sufficiently different to warrant a separate analysis of their relationship to organizational culture.

4 Morgan (1980) uses the term "paradigm" to denote "an implicit or explicit view of reality" (pp. 606-607). "Puzzle solving" basically refers to "research activities" that arise out of and attempt to operationalise assumptions rooted in a particular paradigm.

5 In a recent interview Gareth Morgan stated that the concept "world view" might have been more usefully employed than that of the concept "paradigm" developed by Burrell and Morgan (1979) [Mills 1987].

6 Clegg is primarily concerned with **class** control which he sees as operating through a number of rules that penetrate organizations in different ways and in different degrees. "Extra-organizational" rules refer to socially constructed notions about the nature and worth of people according to their gender, race and ethnic background. Organizations trade on such rules in assigning women and blacks to low paid and low status posts. "Technical" rules are implicit within and effect control by way of production techniques. "Reproduction" rules refer to ideological support for existing organizational practices, i.e., usually in the form of organizational and management theory. "Strategic" rules refer to the ability of organiza-

tions to exercise control over their environment. "State" rules intervene and influence organizational control in a number of direct and indirect ways. And "Social regulative" rules are those forms of control which intervene into the social arrangements within the productive/organizational processes.
Despite their intention as foci of class-bound behavior Clegg"s rules are adaptable to an understanding of gender-bound behavior and are utilised as such throughout this paper.

7 This term encompasses those working in the fields of Organizational Sociology and Theory (Hearn and Parkin 1983); Organizational Behavior and Human/Performance (Chatov 1981); Organizational Psychology (Burrell 1984) and Management (Allaire and Firsirotu 1984).

8 The results of the Hawthorne studies, for example, were presented as a coherent body of findings that sought to explain the behavior of employees **per se**, despite the fact that one key group consisted of females (the "test room") and the other key group consisted of males (the "bank wiring room"). As Acker and Van Houten point out, "Commentators on the original research have not noted that the group with increased output was all female, and the group with restricted output was all male." (Acker and Van Houten 1974, p. 253).

9 Coch and French (1948) influenced organizational thinking with their findings that "worker participation" in decision-making could "overcome resistance to change and yet their study was based primarily on females. A decade later French and his colleagues, working with groups of males, failed to replicate the findings. The subjects were less willing to accept the legitimacy of participation schemes, were more attracted to group norms of restricted output and, as a result, changes in work patterns were resisted (French, Israel and Aos 1960).

10 The work of Lewin, Lippitt and White (1978) greatly influenced theories of management style with their argument that "democratic leadership" style encourages productiveness. This argument was, however, generalized out of the behavior of single-sex subject groups - **ten year old boys!**

11 Blauner's (1967) study of "alienation" is a case in point. Here men's expressions of alienation are recorded as evidence of the character of certain working conditions (rooted in technology). Women's discontent, on the other hand, is explained in terms of their "weaker physical stamina and their family commitments."

12 Focus is usually on professional, staff and technical employees that man(!) the middle and upper ranks of organizations (Clegg 1981). The corporate cultures of Japanese companies, from which the impetus for this focus arose, tend to include only those middle to higher ranks and generally exclude women (Ouchi 1981).

13 Viewing action as the outcome of perceptions of available options and alternatives can equally be applied to female as well as male actors - "to *her* definitions, *her* actions and *her* priorities" (Clegg and Dunkerley 1980, p. 405).

14 Burrell and Morgan (1979) further divide such approaches into "radical humanist" and "radical structuralist" paradigms.

15 Even Davis' (1984) concern with corporate culture seems compelled to make some, albeit fleeting, reference to the impact of gender. He cites the development of "two-income" families as having a potential impact upon the character of organizations and goes on to state that, "... equal employment opportunity, affirmative action, and a new concern for occupational health and safety have all worked their way into the cultures of most corporations." (Davis 1984, p. 9)

16 Oakley (1972) makes an important distinction between *sex* and *gender*, arguing that sex refers to basic physiological differences between men and women while gender refers to culturally specific patterns of behavior which may be attached to the sexes. In other words, gender refers to a set of assumptions about the nature and character of the biological differences between males and females; assumptions that are manifest in a number of ideas and practices which have a determinate

influence upon the identity, social opportunities and life experiences of the actors involved.

Those assumptions, however, are usually developed and refined in contexts dominated by males and, hence, tend to be disadvantageous to females (Rosaldo 1974).

17 I have deliberately chosen the term *master* to reflect the cultural dominance of some groups over others.

18 Burrell argues that, "the suppression of sexuality is one of the first tasks the bureaucracy sets itself" Burrell (1984, p. 98).

19 "To be firmly located in the public realm today is, for the most part, to be embedded within bureaucratic discourse; to be firmly grounded in the nonbureaucratic is to be removed from the arenas of available public speech" (Ferguson 1984, p. 23).

20 This is not an outmoded problem by any means. The Abella Commission (1984), reporting the current situation in Canada, state that, "Though some teachers and guidance counsellors undoubtedly resist stereotyped thinking, their advice about courses and their suggestions for career or job choices are all too often swayed by the child's gender, race, ethnicity or disability. They offer traditional suggestions, tending to encourage a restrictive rather than an expansive approach to educational options and reflecting less the real aptitude of the child than their own - often well-meant - perceptions of what the child, as a member of a particular gender or group, can or ought to do" (Abella 1984, p. 133).

21 In Canada the ability of females to enter organizations and retain their positions once in has been hampered and often severely restricted by an array of federal and provincial actions or inactions. It is a situation, as Hill (1973) documents, that has a long and continuing history. Access to government employment is still restricted in a number of ways. Entry and involvement in the Canadian Forces, the RCMP and the Crown corporations is still restrictive for females (respective reports in *The Edmonton Journal*, 12th and 19th February 1987, and Abella 1984, chapter 3). Recent legislative cases in Alberta and in Manitoba have revealed continued limited protection for women in things like dismissal and sexual harassment. In Alberta cases have recently come to light of women who were dismissed when they became pregnant but, because they had not been employed for the same employer for one year or more, were not protected under the *Employment Standards* Act. In Manitoba, on November 19th 1986, the Court of Appeal dismissed the case of two waitresses claiming sexual harassment against their employer. In a unanimous decision the Court ruled that there was no protection against sexual harassment under human rights legislation, unless it is specifically stated in the legislation (only Ontario, Quebec, Newfoundland and the federal Act do). Report in *Canadian Human Rights Advocate*, Vol. III, No. 1, January 1987.

22 In regard to recruitment, for instance, women are often recruited to positions that reproduce the functions - caring (e.g., nurses), cleaning (e.g., charworkers), food preparation (e.g. cooks) - and relationships of domestic life. Where those functions are thought to involve such things as responsibility, independent thought and/or high levels of skill, knowledge and professional competency then significantly less women are found in the posts, e.g., as in the case of doctors, janitors and chefs.

23 Unlike the game of chess, in organizational life there are very few powerful "queens." In real life the "kings" tend to be the more powerful pieces.

24 The narrow distribution of females throughout industry is remarkably similar throughout western industrial nations. The contrast between the British account of Bilton et al (1983) with the Canadian study of the Abella Commission (1984) is striking: Bilton et al report that, "Of twenty-seven occupational orders listed in the 1971 Census, almost two-thirds of female employees are contained in three groupings: clerical workers ...; service workers ...; professional, technical workers and artists" (Bilton et al 1983, p. 335).

The Abella Commission report that, "To summarize, in 1981 women were still largely concentrated in the clerical, sales and service occupations" (Abella 1984, p. 67).

In either case both studies report that women are largely concentrated in low paying industries, low paying jobs, and in the relatively lower paid jobs of other industries and occupations.

25 A most invidious form of this is the creation of an atmosphere in which females come to understand that success within the organization relies on sexual favours to those in control. Two notorious cases in Edmonton in recent times provide useful examples. The first case involved the Educational Psychology department at the University of Alberta over 1985-86, and the second involved the city's law department over the period 1986-87. In both cases complainants involved several females and took at least two years before they were properly, officially investigated. The outcomes were also similar. In the U of A case an educational psychology professor was found to have engaged in sexual harassment. He was suspended for 6 months without pay and fined $2,000. In the city hall case a manager was fired, another was exonerated, and a third agreed to quit in return for a $160,00 severance-package. Six of the female complainants had, for various reasons, felt compelled to leave the organization. As one said after the announcement of the severance award, "Had I realized that this man would get such a beautiful settlement, I would probably have never bothered making a complaint" (quoted in the *Edmonton Journal*, 17 January 1987).

What these cases have in common is that while sexual harassment came to light the organizations were reluctant to deal with them. Not only were they slow to respond but they gave out mixed signals - on the one hand, sexual harassment is wrong and thus punishable but, on the other hand, sexual harassment is, nonetheless, not that bad and thus the punishments and the processes of investigation need not be that severe or rigorous.

26 Language can be particularly potent, e.g., "the girls in the office," "the dragon lady," etc.

27 There have been various cases of females who enter traditional male occupations facing barrages of sexual harassment to make the point that they shouldn't be in the job. In a recent case involving detachments of the RCMP in British Columbia, female officers complained of "corporals and sergeants who tried to coerce them into bed or played crude sex jokes on them" (quoted in the *Edmonton Journal*, 20 January 1987). As a result several female members of the force did leave the RCMP.

28 A recent study within "a large coast-to-coast Canadian public sector organization" found that, "Traditional supervisors of women ... evaluated the women supervised ... *as less* able to: (1) autonomously direct their subordinates; (2) assist in the career development of their subordinates; and (3) effectively monitor the day-to-day results of their subordinates."

Interestingly, these results were interpreted, "in terms of mores from the greater macro-culture which were reflected inside the organization via gender-related barriers to equity such as absence of effective role models, difficulty gaining access to informal networks, tokenism, and the belief found here that women as supervisors in non-traditional areas are dysfunctional for the organization and for the upward mobility of their subordinates." (Simpson, McCarrey and Edwards, 1987, p.15).

29 A half an hour spent in a labour delivery ward of a hospital should be enough to convince anyone of the relative capabilities of females and males in regard to physical strength and stamina.

30 The Ottawa Police department, for example, had a policy of restricted entry to those under five feet ten inches; a policy which had an adverse effect on the potential of women to enter the department given that the height requirement could only be met by 5% of females in Canada. The policy was overturned in 1979 by an

an Ontario Board of Inquiry because the police department could not demonstrate the validity of the requirement. (Reported in Desler and Duffy, 1984, p. 31).

31 CNR previously restricted entry to those over 5 foot 7 inches and 146 pounds. While such restrictions did not prohibit females per se they had the effect of signalling that the work was for males.

32 From the work of Frederick Taylor on job designers have shown that, within certain limits, either work can be redesigned to fit the characteristics and abilities of people or technology can be made to assist and overcome the limits of *human* capabilities. Men involved in physical labour, for instance, are rarely expected to directly lift vast weighty objects; they are usually provided with cranes, fork-lift trucks, etc.

33 A study by the Canadian Advisory Council on the Status of Women reported in February 1987 that the Canadian Jobs Strategy did not encourage women to learn skills that are in short supply. The study found that most women train for clerical, sales and service jobs "when 55 per cent of women who are now unemployed worked in those areas." (Reported in *The Edmonton Journal*, February 19, 1987 edition).

34 The wage gap between men and women in Canada is considerable (Gunderson and Jain 1980) and has only very slowly changed over the last 20 years or so. Indeed on 13 March 1987 the Toronto *Globe and Mail* reported - *Women losing battle on the* wage gap. The story detailed a report from Statistics Canada that, "For the first time in at least 18 years, women lost ground in 1985 in the battle to reduce the wage gap with men.... The average income for women working full-time in 1985 was $18,736, 64.9% of that of their male counterparts, ... down from 65.5% in 1984."

35 In Canada, as in other western industrial societies, these professions contain a minority of women (Abella 1984).

36 Riley argues that the political language of organizations often utilises strongly male military images: the army unit or the football team being invoked to engender organizational *team* work.

37 "Even where the tasks of Crown Corporations directly parallel those of private sector enterprises ... they are engaged in something more than a business venture. Most are created as instruments of national purpose and that purpose, as expressed in their mandates, extends beyond the business at hand." Canada, Royal Commission on Financial Management and Accountability. *Final Report*, Ottawa, March 1979, p. 328-329. (quoted in Abella 1984, p. 101).

38 Unions, of course, are themselves organizations that are prone to a similar range of gendered rule relationships.

39 Defined by Cooper and Davidson as "unwelcome sexual advances, requests for sexual favours and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature" (1981, p. 101).

40 In an early draft more male oriented images of "*strategies in the battle*" were used. Gendered thinking does indeed run deep!

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Deborah Poff

WOMEN AND ECONOMIC EQUITY IN CANADA

La double question du statut des femmes au Canada et de leur égalité économique a été analysée dans le Rapport de la Commission Royale d'enquête sur l'égalité dans l'emploi, comme dans les sections 15 et 28 de la Charte canadienne des droits et libertés.
Dans cette communication, le professeur Poff considère que, malgré les engagements pris dans ces documents, la société canadienne est encore une société essentiellement "primitive". Elle base cette conclusion sur le peu de succès qu'a connu la société canadienne dans la mise en pratique de la notion d'égalité.

* * *

Canadians have recently reintroduced a discussion about the morality of capital punishment as a just response to at least some acts of murder. In addition to the usual discussions about the justification of retribution and the impact of capital punishment as a deterrent, many opposed to capital punishment see it as a symbol of how civilized or uncivilized our society really is.

After spending a number of years addressing the various aspects of the increasing feminization of poverty both in Canada and globally, this strikes me as decidedly incongruous although sadly not surprising. My humanist and liberal friends seem shocked when I suggest that the abolition of capital punishment is an odd benchmark with which to assess the benevolence and progressive nature of a civilization. Capital punishment has always been a safe and guarded moral territory for humanists. To suggest that it should not be or to suggest that it, at least, should be very low on any priority list of moral issues seems to be an admission of alliance with a regressive and punitive morality of brutality and barbarism. Yet my criticism is about the

discussion of capital punishment *per se*. I believe that the very moral irrelevance of capital punishment to most of our lives is what makes it so attractive as an issue for moral debate. As such, it works as a smoke-screen and diverts our attention from overwhelming, obvious and pervasive inequities in Canadian society. Let me give you two scenarios to illustrate this point.

Society A is an egalitarian society where all citizens are treated substantially the same in terms both of access to education, health care, occupations, housing, etc., and in terms of a just distribution of the goods of the society. There is no starvation, no unwanted pregnancy, no abuse of children, women or the elderly. Society A does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, age or sexual orientation. Society A kills its convicted killers.

In Society B, there is much violence, poverty and discrimination. Women in the paid labour force average about sixty-five cents for every dollar earned by a man. When this average is disagreggated for women between the ages of thirty-five years to fifty-five years (where seventy percent of the female workers fall out), women average about fifty-five cents for every dollar earned by a man. Two-thirds of all citizens over the age of sixty-five living below the poverty line in society B are female. Eighty percent of single-parent families are female-headed and sixty percent of those families live below the poverty line. One in every six women is beaten by her male partner and one in every six women is sexually assaulted. Society B has disproportionate levels of unemployment among racial minorities including indigenous peoples. It also has a disproportionately high rate of youth unemployment. Society B does not include sexual orientation as a ground for equal rights and equal protection from discrimination in its federal charter. Society B has abolished capital punishment.

Need I ask, which is the most civilized society?

In the capital punishment debate, I think that it is fair to assume that in references to a civilized society, "civilized" is taken to be synonymous with a just or a fair society. Philosophers have debated the necessary and sufficient conditions of a just society since the time of Plato without consensus or resolution. Although Canadian opinion is probably as diverse as the range of philosophic discourse on justice, we can assess one measure of justice by examining the extent to which Canadian reality is consistent with Canadian justice as outlined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

I will concentrate in this discussion solely on the issue of economic equity and the status of women in Canada. I do so for three reasons. Women are the majority of the population in Canada as in the rest of the world. Women were identified in the 1984 Royal Commission Report on Equality in Employment as one of four designated groups who were systematically discriminated against in Canada. (They are also members of the other three

groups.) Thirdly, women's equality is entrenched in the Canadian charter in sections 15 and 28.

What I will argue in the rest of this paper is that contrary to Canada's explicit commitment to equality and specifically contrary to Canada's commitment to economic equality for women, it is a highly uncivilized society. Furthermore, while the Canadian government has increasingly adopted egalitarian language with respect to women's economic status, it has at the same time implemented legislation which will not improve women's economic status in Canada while at the same time pursuing economic policy which will, in fact, diminish women's economic status in Canada.

Feminists have argued that certain types of rhetoric and certain ideologies make sexism more difficult to identify, understand and ameliorate. Mary Hawkesworth[1] has argued in this vein that the prevalence of atomistic individualism in the United States (where the individual is perceived as the primary bearer of rights) mitigates against the recognition of group discrimination and against the ability consequently to rectify group injustice. In a related manner, I would argue that when rhetoric sounds more egalitarian as, for example, when inclusive language is used to identify both females and males, discrimination may become less easily identified while it is no less real. I will return to this point later.

Having said this, let us look at Canada's actual accomplishments with respect to women's equality. The relevant sections of the Charter are Sections 15 and 28. Section 15 came into effect on April 17, 1985 and section 28 was included in the charter after a successful and well-publicized national lobby by women's groups across the country. Section 15.1 of the Charter deals with equality rights and section 15.2 clearly states that affirmative action is constitutional in Canada.

Section 15.1 states:

> "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability."

The intent of 15.1 is to guarantee not only administrative equality but substantive equality and also to guarantee not only equal protection but equality in access to the benefits of the law. Such rights were not guaranteed under the Canadian Bill of Rights.

Section 15.2 states:

> "Subsection 1 does not preclude any law, program or activity that has as its object the amelioration of conditions of disadvantaged individuals or

> groups including those that are disadvantaged because of race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability."

Finally, section 28 states:

> "Notwithstanding anything in this Charter, the rights and freedoms referred to in it are guaranteed equally to male and female persons."

In response to the 1984 Royal Commission on Equality in Employment and in keeping with the intent of Section 15 of the Charter, the federal government introduced the Employment Equity Act which received Royal Assent in June of 1986. The Employment Equity Act applies to Crown corporations and federally regulated businesses with more than 100 employees. Additionally, companies with 100 employees or more tendering contracts with the federal government of $200,000 or more are obligated to state that they accept the government's commitment to employment equity. All relevant groups are expected to keep track of their hiring practices and to file a report of those practices by June 1, 1987.

As has been stated by many groups, the limitations of this legislation are obvious and the omissions are blatant. Since the vast majority of Canadian companies employ fewer than 100 employees, they are exempt from the legislation. The Canadian Government estimates that approximately 900 companies employing less than one million Canadians will be affected [2]. If we add the approximately 600,000 workers employed by the federal government and by crown corporations, we find that only twelve percent of the roughly thirteen million workers in Canada are covered by the Employment Equity Act. More disheartening, still, is inadequacy of the legislation for that twelve percent. Specifically, the act has been criticized for the lack of definition of employment equity and the lack of mechanisms for enforcement. As the Boyer Committee on Equality Rights notes with respect to the latter concern,

> "A principle shortcoming of Bill C-62 [the employment equity bill] is the absence of enforcement mechanisms. Employers must file annual reports with Employment and Immigration Canada, and some evaluation process appears likely. However, if successive reports show little or no progress towards equality of employment opportunities and benefits for the designated groups, no sanctions are available".[3]

Equally disheartening is the federal government's lack of progressive policy with regard to part-time workers. While section 15 of the Charter states that every individual has equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination, part-time workers seem clearly to be exceptions. Seventy-two percent of all part-time workers in Canada are female.

The Boyer Report summarizes the circumstances of part-time workers as follows:

"* they are frequently paid less per hour than their full-time counterparts;
* they may not qualify for unemployment insurance benefits;
* they are often denied the right to participate in employer-sponsored pension and benefit plans;
* they may not be eligible for sick leave, paid vacation or statutory holidays; and
* they may not be entitled to participate in the Canada or Quebec Pension Plans ."[4]

To this list Julie White adds,

"* Part-time workers are highly ghettoized with 77% employed in just two industries, trade and services.
* Part-time workers are low paid, receiving on average 79% of the pay of full-time workers. . .
* Part-time workers have little job security. Often they work as casuals, called in on short notice to fill in for absent full-time workers. Regular part-time workers may be excluded from seniority rights and be the first to be laid off when cutbacks occur.
* Part-time workers lack the protection of unionization. In 1981 only 15% of workers in part-time jobs were unionized, compared to 35% of full-time workers."[5]

Part-time work is increasing in Canada more rapidly than was projected by the 1983 Commission of Inquiry into Part-time Work. This may be both a consequence of office automation (e.g., in the banking industry) and a consequence of the realization of companies that having more part-time workers with no rights to benefits, salary increases or job protection is cost-effective. This is especially true in the retail and merchandizing industry where longer shopping hours provide the possibility for swingshifts and split-shifts among workers.

All indications suggest that the Canadian government is going to be equally insensitive to women's needs in changing federal child care legislation. Currently, the Canadian Day Care Advocacy Association, the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and the Canadian Labour Congress is launching a national campaign to protest the recommendations of the Federal Task Force on Child Care and to emphasize the necessity of universal, accessible, non-profit quality child care in Canada.

The Minister Responsible for the Status of Women, Barbara McDougall, is also responsible for free trade and for privatization. Perhaps more than anything else this curious portfolio most clearly illustrates the bad faith of the current government's alleged commitment to women's eco-

nomic equity. Women in the paid labour force are employed predominantly in the light manufacturing, retail industries and service or support sector. The combined impact of free trade and privatization on employment in these areas will undoubtedly be devastating to women.

In her critique of the MacDonald Report, Marjorie Cohen states that,

> "Women's labour in the manufacturing sector is highly concentrated in the industries which are generally considered to be *most* vulnerable to free trade. These industries are textiles, clothing, small electrical products, sporting goods, toys and games, and leather products. About two-thirds of the workers in these six industries are women and altogether these industries account for about 42% of all female manufacturing workers."[6]

While the MacDonald Report acknowledged that there would be job loss in these areas, it stated that such job loss would provide opportunity to leave low-wage jobs for better employment opportunities. Such job opportunities are highly unlikely among a population which Cohen describes as older than average, "more likely to be immigrants and therefore less likely to speak English or French; ...more likely to be married;...have considerably lower levels of education than the average female worker in Canada...and much more likely to be living in Quebec" [7].

Barbara McDougall has stated that,

> "We are pursuing privatization on a case-by-case basis, assessing our initiatives in a careful, pragmatic and businesslike fashion. We are developing a process designed to effect a transfer of public assets to the market place, in those cases where we believe the market place is better suited to manage these enterprises "[8]

Thus far the government has sold eleven Crown corporations with clearly more to come. The rationale for such activity is hardly new. It is to reduce the deficit, cut inefficient public spending and make current public sector services more competitive in terms of the best product for the best price. Criticism of such arguments are equally familiar. As Milton Friedman has repeatedly noted, the purpose of private enterprise is to serve its stockholder's best interests and to maximize profit for the corporation - period. Adam Smith's hidden hand all too frequently remains just that, hidden if not atrophied whenever legislation does not impose considerations other than economic upon corporations.

Furthermore, it is not clear that the private sector provides the best product for the best price especially when it comes to social services such as health care. Nor is it clear that the public sector is inefficient or badly managing the public monies when it comes to services like health care. The

private and the public sector have very different objectives with respect to social services and, hence, may be unfairly compared when only economic factors are taken into consideration. However, despite these different objectives, comparisons which have been done do not support the claim that private sector services are more cost effective. In fact, many studies show just the opposite. In comparing costs of health services for the years 1964-1972, Alex Michalos noted that "Canadians (individually and through government disbursements) always spend less than Americans for health care" although Canada had almost twice the number of hospitals per 100,000 inhabitants than did the United States during that period [9]. To this Joan Hannant adds that,

> "despite increased reliance on private delivery and funding, administrative health costs are significantly higher in the United States (approximately 16 percent of total costs) than they are in Canada (about 4 percent)....In Canada, which is still a primarily public system, health care costs as a percentage of the GNP, have remained at the 8 percent level for several years, while costs in the privatized U.S. system have risen to 10.2 percent of GNP."[10]

Furthermore, it should be remembered that universal health care or protective regulatory legislation in the airline industry, to use another example, has a first goal the well-being of the citizens using such services. Clearly, this is not and cannot be a prime motivator for the private sector. Corporations must turn a profit and most indications are that the most effective means to reduce cost and to maximize profit are to reduce staff, roll back wages and decrease services where those services are not profitable. One of the prime concerns of Canadian families and child care workers today is that profitable private sector child care means child care which is available to urban, dual-income, middle-class families and to them alone. At best, when only commercial private child care is available, it results in a twotiered system where the wealthy have access to quality child care and where low-income families do not. Overwhelmingly these are female-headed single-parent homes where such disincentives in access to affordable quality child care combined with low-wages leads to women "choosing" to live on provincial welfare subsidies. And, in the nursing home industry where both patients and workers are predominantly female, privatizing leads to lower wages, less quality health-care, less access to doctors and registered nurses, less individual attention, a higher patientworker ratio, less privacy for patients and less quality food.

Joan Hannant argues that the general impact of privatization "increases consumers' costs, reduces quality, jeopardizes health and safety and limits access to services" [11]. Since it also eliminates jobs held primarily by women who are the least mobile members of the workforce either because of their husband's job location or because they have worked out some ad hoc

system to cost share child care, the impact of privatization will be most severely felt by those least able to afford it.

So it would seem that while the egalitarian rhetoric of Canada is stronger than it has at least constitutionally ever been, the Canadian government is single-mindedly pursuing a goal which will systematically ensure the continual feminization of poverty in Canada. One could speculate on the motivation of the current government in pursuing such policy. However, not only is this a fruitless speculative enterprise but it is also fundamentally misguided. One need not adopt a conspiracy theory about malevolent and conscious attempts to oppress women to analyze meaningfully the incongruities between such current policy and the stated commitment to women's equality. Nor does one need such speculation to come up with a program for change. However, I do think we must analyze the function of language and liberal ideology in anesthetizing otherwise caring Canadians into a complacency about the status of women which makes change very difficult.

I stated at an earlier point in this paper that language and ideology, specifically liberal and progressive language and ideology, may thwart the recognition of inequities and consequently of activities which would eliminate those inequities. In this way, Americans internalize the language and values of individualism and equality which not only is a mythic dream for most of its inhabitants but which leads to an inability on the part of most Americans to recognize and change the structural and academic inequities in the American political system.

Many Canadians take pride in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*. It is a document that speaks of equity and justice for all. Yet such equity and justice is not a reality. The language of equality between the sexes has resulted in an oft-stated belief that such equality has been achieved. Most of the young female students I teach do not think that they will face job or pay discrimination and believe that they will be successful at any occupation they choose. And this, despite well-known and well-publicized statistics to the contrary. In fact, a number of them maintain these beliefs even after the statistical information has been duplicated and handed out to them. There are a number of reasons why they may react this way which I will not pursue here (e.g., a psychological resistance to unpleasant and threatening information). However, one reason which I do not wish to explore concerns the different levels of expressions of sexism in our society. Sandra Harding argues that,

> "The model of the sexist projected by much social science research, as well as by such cultural figures as the male chauvinist or machismo latino, is a working-class person who overtly expresses his hostility to women and his ignorance about them; in comparison, the middle class, to which most social scientists themselves belong, appears relatively unprejudiced and tolerant. Yet it is not latinos and working-class men

who design and direct the institutions that maintain the subjugation of women. Class stratification of overt sexism is better understood as a function of two other phenomena. In the first place, middle class people are increasingly taught not to express sexism overtly. More important, men already established in the elite strata of the government and the professions are not personally threatened by affirmative action directives, and they can afford alimony and child support (even if they resent it). Working-class men and men in entry-level professional jobs feel the effect of attempts to gain equality for women far more than do the elite. Thus not only is "tolerance" taught to the middle class; it is a luxury they can afford."[12]

What I have argued in the preceding pages of this discussion is that despite a veneer and rhetoric of equality there is overwhelming evidence to support women's systemic inequity in this country. I think Harding's analysis gives some indication of why such seeming inconsistencies exist. The educated, the middle class, the liberal social reformers in Canada have adopted not only a civilized or tolerant demeanor toward women, but also in many cases have been forward-thinking in promoting and mentoring women of the same class, political orientation and profession. However, these same individuals have largely been removed from and unaware of the reality of the lives of the significant majority of women in Canada. Only 5 percent of women in the paid labour force earn over the $25,000 a year salary which is the national average for men. Without knowledge or awareness of the systemic discrimination against women there has been no informed and systematic treatment of policy to appreciate how differently the same policy may affect a small proportion of men and at the same time hurt the majority of the female population in Canada.

In both the MacDonald Report and in most of the statements about the impact of free trade and privatization on the Canadian labour market, the underlying assumptions of traditional economic theory mask the reality of women's lives. Jobs will disappear in one area but new jobs will be created elsewhere. The underlying assumption here is that all workers are fundamentally the same and interchangeable. The lack of specific awareness about the non-transferability of many low-level skills in female job ghettos plus the lack of awareness that the reality of most women's lives keeps them in one geographic location results in policies that will hurt the poorest group of people in the country the hardest.

The Canadian vision of justice does speak to issues of equality and fairness in a manner which acknowledges systematic discrimination. The fact that affirmative action is constitutional in this country acknowledges that and we can be rightly proud of such a constitutional commitment. However, the underlying political assumptions of mainstream economic theory and mainstream liberal ideology work against translating that vision into reality. What we have in section 15.2 of the Charter is a normative political claim

which is at odds with allegedly descriptive mainstream economic theory. Mainstream economic theory assumes that it is reasonable to conceptualize people as idealized abstract interchangeable workers while section 15(2) recognizes that such beings do not exist. Workers must be particularized and concretized, that is, they must be understood as the flesh and blood, socially and economically constrained beings that they really are if policy is to be equitable and just.

In conclusion, what affirmative action demands, or in terms of the title of this paper, what equity demands for women, is not the narrowly defined employment equity legislation we currently or even more broadly based affirmative action hiring legislation. What it demands as a normative theory is that all political and social policy be analyzed in terms of its impact not only on women but on all citizens both as individuals and as members of designated groups who have been and continue to be discriminated against as a consequence of their sex, race, age, sexual orientation or disability.

Notes

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